



## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Aging

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### DOA Administrative Letter No. 01-5

**To:** Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Center Personnel

**From:** Karen Gottovi *Karen E. Gottovi*

**Subject:** CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING SENIOR CENTER CERTIFICATION; SENIOR CENTER DEFINITIONS INCLUDING "SATELLITES" AND "DEVELOPING SENIOR CENTERS"

**Date:** April 24, 2001

This letter responds to questions that have arisen about 1) the senior center certification process and 2) the definition for a *satellite center* and a *developing center*, particularly in relation to senior center certification.

### Background

During 1998, the Division of Aging (DOA), with the assistance of a statewide task force, developed two senior center models, the Center of Merit and the Center of Excellence. From these models, a set of criteria was developed and incorporated into the 1999-2003 State Aging Plan. These criteria served as the basis from which the *Senior Center Operations and Program Evaluation (SCOPE) Tool and Scoring Guide* were developed. In August 1999, two centers served as pilots for the certification process. Located in Chatham and Rowan Counties, they became the first two Centers of Excellence in North Carolina.

The Division promotes and/or funds several senior center efforts:

- The Senior Center Certification Process which includes the models for Centers of Merit and Excellence
- Senior Center Operations (HCCBG funds)
- Senior Center Development (capital improvement, construction, and renovations. Not currently funded)
- Senior Center Outreach (state funds)
- Senior Center General Purpose Funding (state funds)

Because legislation for some of the above programs and funding was written at different times and for different purposes, the standards, qualifications, assurances, criteria, and definitions for each of these efforts are separate and do not necessarily complement each other.

### How General Purpose Funding Relates to Senior Center Certification

Originally, General Purpose funding related to senior centers and developing centers as identified by Area Agencies on Aging. With the development of the senior center certification process, the legislature



permitted the Division to award additional General Purpose funding to senior centers that attained certification. Because of the current budget shortfall, we are not yet able to decide on future funding for certified centers.

The Division of Aging has worked to develop the certification process with criteria that encourage centers across the state to strive for levels of "merit" or "excellence." It is felt that all viable senior centers in the state could meet the new certification criteria in a reasonable amount of time. An intent of the certification process has been to eventually increase base funding for those who have successfully completed the process. This insures that funding is being well spent on readily identifiable programs and services, and provides an incentive for centers that make investments to meet certification requirements

### **How General Purpose Funding Was Divided in FY 00-01**

For the July 2000-June 2001 fiscal year, the Area Agencies identified a total of 160 existing senior centers and developing centers for General Purpose funding. Since only 1 million dollars was available, this funding was divided into 164 equal shares: The two Centers of Excellence, which had piloted the certification process the year before, each received three shares, or \$18,291 each. [Two shares would have been made available to Centers of Merit, if any had been certified at that time.] The remaining 158 uncertified centers received one share each, or \$6,097.

These additional shares for the two Centers of Excellence were available only to the "main" multi-purpose senior center (MPSC), and the satellites of these centers received one share as they have received in the past through General Purpose funding. The "main" center and its satellite represent a *senior center network*.

### **Definition of a Senior Center Network**

*A senior center network is a group or system of community facilities linked administratively to a multi-purpose senior center for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services, which includes the provision of health (including mental health), social, nutritional, educational, and recreational services and activities for older individuals. Typically, a senior center network consists of a "main" center and one or more satellite centers or developing centers. Satellites and developing centers supplement the multi-purpose senior center by extending services and activities into other areas of the community so that more older adults can be served. See definitions in this letter for "satellite center" and "developing center."*

### **Satellites and Developing Centers**

All centers in the state designated by the Area Agencies on Aging as senior centers, satellite centers and developing centers for the purpose of receiving General Purpose funding are listed in the Senior Center Directory prepared by the Division of Aging. (The Senior Center Directory is available by county and by region on the Division's web site: <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/home.htm>).

Any programs which are not currently listed in the Senior Center Directory at the time of application for certification are not recognized as satellite centers or developing centers and therefore are not to be included in Section VII, "Satellites" in the SCOPE tool—e.g., nutrition sites or single activity outreach posts. Such programs also are not eligible for General Purpose funding. (The Area Agencies on Aging are advised on a quarterly basis to update the Senior Center Directory. Reggie Durham is the Division of Aging staff contact for updates.)

Satellite centers that meet the definition included on page 3 may be included in Section VII, "Satellites," within the SCOPE tool to enhance the effectiveness of the MPSC or "main" center that is undergoing certification. The satellite center, per se, is not scored except in relation to the questions completed for the MPSC. If certification is achieved, it only applies to the MPSC. Its satellites would not be

individually certified. They would simply be a part of the *network* within that county. **See definition of senior center network above.**

In rating the MPSC, the review team considers information about the satellites in the overall evaluation criteria. For example, if the square footage of the MPSC is 3,800 square feet and required minimum is 4,000 square feet, square footage of the satellite might be considered if otherwise the main center has a strong program.

In order for a satellite to become a stand-alone certified multi-purpose senior center, it must meet *all* of the criteria for at least the Center of Merit, including but not limited to: Information and Referral, Assistance, and Outreach requirements [Section 1, Q. 1, pages 1-3 of tool]; appropriate Outreach activities, [Section 1, Q. 6-9, pages 5-7]; a specific number of regular activities scheduled each week and annually [Section II, Q.14-15, pages 10-15]; a specialized plan for volunteers [Section II, Q. 19-22, page 17]; an array of documented advocacy efforts [Section II, Q. 23, page 18]; a separate board not associated with the main center meeting specific board requirements [Section III, Q. 26-28, page 21]; specific staffing requirements with written personnel policies and required training [Section IV, Q. 35-39, pages 25-27]; the center must be open at least 40 hours per week, be at least 4,000 square feet with at least 3,200 feet available for center activities and not used as office space. **See SCOPE Tool for additional requirements.**

### **Definition of a Satellite Senior Center for the Certification Process**

*A satellite senior center is an extension of a MPSC and must be opened at least three days per week for a minimum of 24 hours and must be linked administratively to a multi-purpose senior center. Satellites must make use of appropriate facilities for its program. Such facilities must be designed, located, constructed or renovated and equipped so as to promote effective access to and operation of its program and to provide for the health, safety and comfort of participants, staff and public. Facilities may be free standing or located in a larger facility with an area designated for senior center programming during specified hours.*

*It must be staffed by a trained and paid senior center manager who is capable of implementing programs during the hours that the satellite center is in operation. The manager must be available during the hours of operation of the satellite center and must be under the supervision of the MPSC Director. This position may not be made up of several part-time positions. The manager must have a written job description. Each employee must attend a minimum of eight hours of training on an annual basis, and must have received training in **at least one** of the following topics each year: first aid; emergency response; CPR; death and dying; Alzheimer's disease or dementia; blood-borne pathogens; HIV/AIDS; aging-related topics; management and supervision; or training specific to job responsibility (e.g., new computer software).*

*The center must offer at least two on going outreach activities, two annual events and five programs and/or activities on a weekly basis, not to include nutrition (if a nutrition program is offered, it is not to be included as one of the five programs and/or activities). There must be a written plan for transportation of participants. A list of activities and the hours they are offered must be posted within the facility. A minimum of two volunteers over the age of 60 must be utilized, with a written plan in place describing the duties of the volunteer. A representative from the satellite center over 60 years of age must be on the board or advisory committee of the MPSC in an ex-officio position. At least 80 percent of the facility space must be used for satellite center activities, and the remaining 20 percent may be used for office space.*

Definitions and explanations for other terms used in the SCOPE Tool may be found in the “*Support Materials for the SCOPE Tool*.” All of these documents are available on the Division web site: <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/home.htm>. These materials are also distributed at Division of Aging Senior Center Certification Training workshops.

## **Time Frames to Re-Apply for Senior Center Certification**

- If a senior center [including its satellite(s) if applicable] does not meet the requirements to become a certified Center of Merit at the time of the on-site review, neither the senior center nor any satellite(s) that were included in the original application may apply for certification until one year after the certification site visit.
- If the senior center meets certification requirements and the MPSC is certified for either Center of Merit or Excellence, any satellite that was included as a part of this certification process may not apply for certification as a free-standing center until three years following the date of certification.
- A senior center that is certified as Center of Merit may not apply for an upgrade to Excellence for three years following the date of certification.

## **Required Certification Training**

Senior centers that intend to apply for certification must *first* have at least one staff person attend the Division's certification training. The Division will announce when these training sessions are offered.

## **Clarification of SCOPE Training Requirements**

For certification purposes, the SCOPE tool includes a requirement of at least 15 hours of training annually for all senior center personnel. However, if the employee is part-time, the minimum number of required training hours may be pro-rated based on the number of hours worked weekly. For example, if an activities coordinator works 20 hours per week, he/she is required to have at least 7.5 hours of training annually.

Only contact training hours (actual training hours in the classroom) are to be counted toward the minimum requirements. Training hours do not include driving time to and from the training, lunch breaks that are not working lunches, or other non-contact time.

## **Monitoring for Certified Centers**

An incentive for attaining certification either as a Center of Merit or a Center of Excellence is to exempt the center from being monitored for Senior Center Operations if the center receives Senior Center Operations funding. This exemption is valid for the three-year period of certification, and applies only to Senior Center Operations. The center will be monitored as usual for any other services funded by the Division of Aging.

## **Future Changes to the SCOPE Tool**

The Division of Aging is continuing to refine the certification process, and is maintaining a list of suggestions and other input from the North Carolina aging network. At the end of the first three years of the certification cycle, the SCOPE Tool will be revised based on this input.

## **New Definition of a *Developing Senior Center* for General Purpose Funding**

As the state legislation for General Purpose funding is written, it enables funding *for senior centers and developing centers*. The legislation does not include definitions for these terms. For this reason, some programs receiving General Purpose funding as *developing centers* are not considered by DOA to be multi-purpose senior centers, satellites, or centers with future potential to become either satellites or

multi-purpose senior centers. In order to preserve available funds for bona fide programs, the Division of Aging has established a new definition for a developing senior center, which follows:

A developing senior center must meet the following definition to receive General Purpose funding, effective July 1, 2002:

*A “developing senior center” must be open at least 16 hours per week. The center must offer at least one on-going outreach activity, one annual event and three different programs and/or activities on a weekly basis during the days it is open, not to include nutrition (if a nutrition program is offered, it is not to be included as one of the three programs and/or activities). There must be a paid or volunteer coordinator available at the site during the hours that it is open. It must be linked administratively to a multi-purpose senior center.*

*The coordinator must have a written job description. Each employee must attend a minimum of six hours of training on an annual basis, and must have received training in **at least one** of the following topics each year: first aid; emergency response; CPR; death and dying; Alzheimer's disease or dementia; blood-borne pathogens; HIV/AIDS; aging-related topics; management and supervision; or training specific to job responsibility (e.g.: new computer software.)*

*By April 30, prior to each annual funding cycle (July - June), a developing senior center must submit a plan outlining the steps it will take during the fiscal year to become either a satellite center or a multi-purpose senior center within three years. The annual plan must also include a report of accomplishments based on the preceding year's plan.*

For developing centers that currently receive General Purpose funding, they must meet the above definition by June 30, 2002, in order to be eligible for future General Purpose funding. They would have three years beginning July 1, 2002, to reach at least the status of satellite center; or they will be removed from the Senior Center Directory, and become ineligible for General Purpose funding.

For developing centers newly identified for General Purpose funding effective July 1, 2001 and thereafter, they will have three years from the date they begin receiving General Purpose funds to reach at least the status of satellite center; or they will be removed from the Senior Center Directory, and become ineligible for General Purpose funding.